

Remarks

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 108-119, 143-145, and 147-150 were pending in this application. Of these claims, claims 115-119 are withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected species.

Claims 144 and 145 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 108-110, 112, 114, 143, and 147-150 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Stevens et al. Patent Publication No. WO 96/32882 (hereinafter "Stevens").

Claims 108-110, 112, 114, and 143 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sideris U.S. Patent No. 5,433,727 (hereinafter "Sideris").

Claims 111 and 113 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens.

Claims 111, 113, and 147-150 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sideris.

Applicants' Reply

Applicants have amended claims 108 and 145 to more particularly define the present invention. The claim amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed and therefore do not add new matter. For example, support for these amendments may be found at least on page 7, line 26 through page 10, line 23 of applicants' specification. Applicants have additionally cancelled claims 143 and 144 without prejudice.

Applicants have amended independent claim 108 to include the allowable limitations recited in claims 143 and 144. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 108 is allowable over the prior art of record, and request that the rejections of independent claim 108 be withdrawn. Additionally, dependent claims 109-114, and 147-150, which contain all the limitations of allowable independent claim 108, are allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicants respectfully request, therefore, that the rejections of these claims be withdrawn as well.

Conclusion

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 108-114, 145, and 147-150 are allowable over the prior art of record. This application is therefore in condition for allowance. Reconsideration, rejoinder of withdrawn claims 115-119, and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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